

Asbestos Containing Material

This factsheet provides staff, patients, neighbours and the hospital community with information about the safe removal and management of asbestos on the Cowra Hospital Redevelopment site.

Due to the age of the buildings at rear of the Cowra Hospital, there are hazardous materials within the building structure.

During the hospital's enabling works, these buildings will be demolished. It is also likely that asbestos may be encountered during excavation of the ground.

The health, safety and well-being of the community is our highest priority and we will implement a rigorous process to ensure the safe removal and disposal of hazardous materials.

FAQs

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral. Asbestos was used as a construction material up until the 1980s because of its strong fibres, low cost and fire-retardant properties.

Where is asbestos used?

Most Australian buildings, including houses and hospitals built before the 1990s contain asbestos in roofing, guttering, vinyl flooring, wall sheeting and many other products. Fragments from historical construction work can also be found in the ground during excavation. The presence of asbestos is not considered harmful unless it is disturbed and inhaled.

When does asbestos pose a risk to health?

Asbestos fibres can pose a risk to health if they become airborne, as inhalation is the main way that asbestos enters the body.

Small quantities of asbestos fibres are present in the air at all times.

Finding that your home or workplace has asbestos does not mean your health is at risk.

People who have suffered health effects from exposure to asbestos have usually had high levels of exposure to airborne dust. They commonly worked in either the asbestos mining or milling industry, industries involved in making or installing asbestos products, or are from the immediate families of these people. This was before disposable protective clothing requirements and other measures were introduced

How is asbestos managed on site?

Hazardous material found on sites is managed in strict accordance with Safe Work NSW and applicable legislation and guidelines.

Asbestos removal is carried out by a licenced specialist contractor under strict conditions. When removing asbestos, work is scheduled to ensure no risk to consumers, staff or the community including:

- High visibility signage will be displayed in the vicinity of worksites to notify staff and visitors of works involving hazardous materials.
- Environmental site assessment and detailed surveys (above and below ground), including air monitoring for baseline readings.

A detailed process including isolation of the areas, establishing exclusion zone and appropriate disposal to a licensed facility to ensure the safety of staff and the community.

Ensuring the health and safety of our patients, families, visitors and staff is always our priority.

If you have any questions please contact the project team.

How can I contact the project team?

For any questions or if you would like more information, please contact the project team:

Email: HI-Cowra@health.nsw.gov.au | Phone: 9978 5432 | Website: www.cowrahospitalredevelopment.health.nsw.gov.au